Thinking beyond the classroom in internationalised higher education: learning from six teacher education graduates who have 'gone home'

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The internationalisation of higher education (HE) is not a neutral set of processes. Rather, it is shaped by political, historical, geographical, social and cultural relationships. Complex relationships are also forged through internationalised HE, as graduates build connections with new places, people and ideas, shaping their study contexts and the contexts that they return to in unique ways. With this in mind, Madge, Raghuram and Noxolo (2009) called for the development of an 'engaged pedagogy', which recognises the relationships inherent in HE provision and the responsibilities that they entail. They argued that such a pedagogy requires: (1) critical attention to the position from which internationalised HE is envisaged; (2) genuine dialogue concerning what constitutes 'best practice'; (3) responsiveness to students' needs beyond the classroom; (4) attention to contextual specificities; and (5) recognition of the quandaries inherent in HE provision.

In this paper, we grapple with what an engaged pedagogy may look like in practice, in light of our interviews with six Malaysia-based graduates of a 'twinned' teacher education programme. The programme ran from 2009 to 2013, and was jointly developed through a Malaysian government-New Zealand university partnership. Students in the programme completed their first and fourth years of study in Malaysia, and their second and third years in New Zealand, graduating with an English language teaching qualification from their New Zealand university. The students' selection for the programme was based on academic ability; their New Zealand study fees were covered by a Malaysian government scholarship, and all were bonded to complete five years teaching service in Malaysia post graduation. On completion of their degree, most were placed in schools characterised by low English proficiency scores, some in very rural and remote locations. The teachers included in this paper were placed in one part of Malaysia, and were interviewed in person in February 2015. They were part of a broader 2014-2015 comparative qualitative research project aimed at tracking the first year teaching journeys of 13 Malaysia-based and six New Zealand-based beginning teachers. The project aimed to explore the beginning teachers' first year teaching experiences in relation to their specific schooling contexts and broader education policy frameworks.

We begin by tracing the development of the twinned teacher education programme and outlining our research rationale and methodology. We then describe the six teachers' first year teaching experiences, including the contexts where they were living and working, the joys and challenges they identified, and their aspirations for the future. In particular, we highlight the material challenges inherent in their study to work transitions; their day-to-day resiliency; and the active ways in which they were shaping their school communities by enacting and 'translating' their teaching knowledge in unique school settings. We conclude by asking what our responsibilities are as HE professionals to collaborate across locations and think beyond our classrooms, for the benefit of our students and graduates, and those they work with in future.

Introduction

'Internationalisation' is commonly referred to in higher education (HE) circles as if it is a transparent or neutral term. However, internationalisation is a contested idea that can be

understood in multiple, contradictory ways. Some scholars associate internationalised HE with democratic ideals and notions of the public good (Jones 1998). Others highlight its connections with neoliberal globalisation and/or the project of Western colonisation, noting the asymmetries inherent in educational mobilities globally (Larner 1998; Rizvi 2004). Madge, Raghuram and Noxolo (2009) argue that internationalisation is deeply connected to broader, historically grounded relations of power. However, they also caution against simplistic discourses of domination or subordination, for example, stressing the need to recognise international students' agency in shaping both the contexts where they study, and ongoing inter-national HE relationships. Madge et al. (2009) call for attention to *relationality* and *responsibility* in internationalised HE through the development of 'layered' understandings of internationalisation (as historically, geographically, historically, politically and culturally situated); a postcolonial "engaged pedagogy" that is "deeply *contextual and place specific*" (p. 43, emphasis original, after hooks 1994); and care *for* students and *about* the circumstances that shape their experiences (after Tronto 1993). Madge et al. (2009) suggest that, in practice, an 'engaged pedagogy' in internationalised HE involves: (1) rethinking the centre from which HE is discussed and imagined; (2) promoting "genuine dialogue" about "best practice", how it is defined and by whom; (3) attending to HE beyond the classroom, for example, by being mindful of the "broader discourses, power hierarchies, and social relations that frame international students' presence" in our HE contexts; and (4) attending to the implications of context and place, and (5) the quandaries inherent in HE provision (p. 43).

In this paper, we grapple with what an 'engaged pedagogy' looks like in practice (Madge et al. 2009). We draw on our interviews with six beginning teachers working in Malaysian schools who were graduates of a 'twinned' (New Zealand-Malaysia) teacher education programme, and participants in a broader study aimed at following the first year teaching journeys of 13 Malaysia-based and six New Zealand-based teachers. The paper is structured using the five elements of an 'engaged pedagogy' identified above. First, we 'rethink the centre', describing the genesis and development of the twinned teacher education programme, and the background context of our study. Then we explain how we endeavoured to 'think beyond the classroom', outlining our study rationale, research methodology and research questions. Next, we consider the implications of context and place, describing where the six teachers were working, the conditions of their employment, and their everyday teaching responsibilities. Then we consider the question of 'best practice' in relation to two themes that emerged in the interviews: engaging children in English-language learning, and responding to challenging behaviour. Finally, we highlight some quandaries that our study raises for those committed to developing an 'engaged pedagogy' in internationalised teacher education and HE more broadly.

Re-thinking the centre: a focus on Malaysia

This paper draws on our interviews with six Malaysia-based graduates of a twinned teacher education programme. The teachers were part of a larger cohort who had completed a four year teacher education programme; the first and final years at a Malaysian HE institution (HEI), and the second and third, in New Zealand. The teachers had been selected for the programme by the Malaysia Ministry of Education based on academic achievement, and their overseas studies were fully funded. They graduated with a New Zealand English language teaching degree, and following graduation, were 'bonded' to government service for five years. It is helpful to consider two contextual details in order to situate both the teacher education programme and our study: the history of Malaysia's educational connection to New Zealand, and the current language teaching focus in Malaysian public schools.

Educational relationships between Malaysia and New Zealand were forged under the 1950 Colombo Plan. This was (in part) a foreign aid programme that funded a relatively small and select group of international students from the Asia-Pacific region to study in New Zealand

and in other Commonwealth countries during a period of Cold War politics and regional decolonisation (Rizvi 2004). While the development of educational relationships under the Colombo Plan can be seen as part of anti-Communist efforts to promote stability in the Asia-Pacific region (Rizvi 2004; Tarling 2004), Tarling (2004) argues that the Colombo Plan led to the development of strong bilateral relationships that became increasingly personal and mutual, and that were later instrumental in facilitating the emergence of New Zealand's 'export education industry' (also see Butcher & McGrath 2004). Anecdotally, relationships developed with New Zealand and New Zealanders during the Colombo Plan era were instrumental in supporting the development of the twinned teacher education programme of interest here.

In a postcolonial era, the Malaysian government's policy position with respect to schools sector education reveals both an ongoing privileging of the English language and what Takayama (2014, p. 3) describes as "regional power dynamics" – the dominance of *Bahasa Malaysia* (the Malay language) within the Malaysian context. Malay is the medium of instruction in most public schools (with the exception of some Chinese and Tamil medium schools), while English-language learning is also emphasised in government policy. Regardless of the medium of instruction, Malay and English are compulsory subjects in all public schools at all levels, and students must pass formal examinations in both languages in order to gain formal school qualifications and university entrance.

The teacher education programme from which the teachers in our study graduated was initiated by the Malaysia Ministry of Education in 2007, and was part of a larger set of primary teacher education twinning arrangements involving five Malaysian and five southern hemisphere HEIs. Programme objectives included to develop students' subject knowledge through using English in context; their skills for teaching English effectively; and their professional values and practices such as commitment, intercultural engagement, and adoption of a questioning, critical standpoint as part of the teaching-learning process. The programme's development was in line with a broader policy focus on strengthening the English speaking proficiency of English language teachers and strengthening English language teaching in Malaysian schools (Ministry of Education 2012). From its inception, all involved in developing the twinning programme were concerned about how the graduates, following their transnational teacher education, would find the transition to teaching in Malaysia.

Thinking beyond the classroom: outlining our study

Madge et al. (2009, p. 43) argue that an engaged pedagogy is, in part, demonstrated through "everyday practices of caring and responsiveness *beyond the classroom*" (emphasis original). We would suggest that one element of such care is attention to the outcomes of HE for the students we recruit and enrol (Walker 2008). At the end of 2013, following ethical approval from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee, we commenced a qualitative, comparative study aimed at following the beginning teachers' initial teaching experiences in relation to their unique teaching contexts and the broader policy contexts that shaped their teaching. Graduating teacher education students who fit the study criteria were invited to participate. Participation was entirely vountary, and not linked in any way to coursework requirements. While we were primarily interested in the first year teaching journeys of the twinned programme graduates, we also included New Zealand based teachers in the study. Research literature suggests that, for any teacher, the first year of teaching is a time of tension, vulnerability, identity shifting and identity shaping, based on the interplay between self, others and context (Britzman 2003; Schaefer 2013; Timoštšuk & Ugaste 2010). We did not want to assume that Malaysia based teachers' experiences were necessarily unique, or different to the experiences of other beginning teachers.

The study involved two aspects: a comparative analysis of national 'vision setting' education policy documents from New Zealand and Malaysia (the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2012–2015*, the New Zealand Ministry of Education *Statement of Intent, 2013–2018*, and the *New Zealand Curriculum* front pages); and following beginning teachers' first year of teaching through 'secret' Facebook groups, online questionnaires and face to face or online semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires used open-ended questions to explore each teacher's teaching context, role within the school, transition experiences, access to support or mentoring, 'first day' and 'critical incident' experiences, areas of enjoyment and challenge, reflections on former teacher education programmes, and advice for prospective beginning teachers and former lecturers. The interviews revisited the teachers' earlier questionnaire responses and explored whether their responses to the questions had changed over time. In addition, the participants were asked what they saw themselves doing in two, five and ten years' time.

Data were analysed using Foulcauldian discourse analysis (Willig 2008) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2013). Participants were self-selecting, but all had graduated from primary teaching programmes in one New Zealand university. Unlike the Malaysian teachers, the New Zealand teachers had chosen where they would apply for teaching positions. In contrast, the Malaysian teachers were 'placed', mostly in rural or semi-rural schools with low English proficiency scores. In the rest of this paper we focus on the perspectives and experiences of six teachers who are bonded government employees and English language teachers working in Malaysia. We were able to visit these teachers in early 2015, gaining rich insights into their work contexts. (Due to funding constraints, we were only able to visit teachers based in one region of Malaysia). In subsequent publications we will focus on our comparative data and the broader themes that emerged in the study, however, we draw on the six teachers' accounts here since they usefully illustrate the impact of context and place on beginning teachers' work, highlighting some important considerations for those of us involved in internationalised HE. We begin by describing the teachers' school contexts and their roles within them.

The implications of context and place for beginning teachers

Madge et al. (2009) argue that an 'engaged pedagogy' requires that we attend to the implications of context and place (also see Marginson & Rhoades 2002; Sidhu 2002). The six teachers we visited were each working in unique contexts. These are described in Table 1, below.

Table 1: The teachers' names (pseudonyms), school size, school community type, and proximity to family.

Teachers' names	School size (approximate no of students)	Description of school community	Proximity to family
Siti	220	Mainly indigenous; rural (village)	Living with family
Hana	200	Mainly Malay; rural (village)	Living with family
Frank	60	Mainly indigenous; rural and remote (jungle)	Family 2 hours drive away
Alya	1800	Malay, indigenous and migrant; urban (city)	Family in a different State
Rayyan	170	Mainly migrant; rural and remote (plantation)	Family in a different State
Laila	400	Mainly migrant; rural and remote (fishing community)	Family in a different State

Siti and Hana were 'placed' near their family homes. Although both teachers appreciated being 'near home', both also associated their placements with a sense of pressure. Siti felt pressure due to the family backgrounds of the children in her school ("so many parents want their children to study here so that means a lot of pressure"), and Hana, due to her perceived status as a transnational graduate. Hana recalled her initial visit to the local education office:

> Before I started working, I was very anxious. As I was introduced at the …State Education Office… it was nerve-wracking. The people had a high expectation of me. They kept on mentioning the [New Zealand university] prestige. I was completely at the centre of attention."

As the graduate of a New Zealand university, Hana felt the weight of others' expectations, despite her status as a novice teacher. Both teachers carried very heavy workloads including extra responsibilities besides teaching. However, both had access to good support and mentoring, as well as family support. Notably, access to mentoring is associated with positive teaching experiences for beginning teachers (Flores 2001), and both Siti and Hana indicated that they intended to continue teaching long-term. Siti associated teaching with a commitment to her community, saying, "I think I need to help my own people".

Frank's school had very difficult access and intermittent power and water. Frank described student attendance as 'patchy' and the school facilities as poorly maintained. He recalled his first encounter with the school in terms of both challenge and wonder:

> The first day of my posting, I went to the education office and got the letter and stuff and I thought I can come back, you know the second day, but they told me to 'just, you know just go up there and experience it yourself', so I just drove. When they told me that the road is rough, (laughter) I was like 'oh it should be ok, I have a four wheel drive', so I just drove. When I came up, I was like 'oh my goodness'…yeah the hills, you know, coming up and down then there was mud and I got stuck…but the view is awesome…it's a job with a view, I keep telling myself that.

Like Siti and Hana, Frank was carrying a very full teaching load and many additional responsibilities. As well as teaching English, he was also teaching subject areas for which he was not qualified. Despite the evident challenges of Frank's position, he stated that he had received a high level of support from his colleagues and valuable mentoring. He said, "the best thing is the school community… my colleagues are awesome". Frank expressed a commitment to teaching in the school for the five years of his 'bond' but indicated that he was not sure that he would stay in teaching long term. Possible options included further study followed by an educational leadership role, or other employment outside Malaysia.

Alya, Rayyan and Laila were all 'placed' far away from family, and were working in very diverse communities (see Table 1). All three teachers described their transition to teaching in terms of physical, affective and professional challenges. These included the need to avoid and cope with threats to personal safety, geographical isolation, multiple additional responsibilities, and limited infrastructure; and the need to come to terms with the complexities of the communities in which they were working. These teachers had limited access to mentoring support, and each described their transition to teaching as an overwhelming experience.

> Rayyan: When I first came there, it's in the middle of nowhere, and then… I didn't have any phone line, I cannot call out, I cannot text anyone out there, and then I have no electricity, the electricity [is] generated by a generator…and then I didn't know anyone there, so it's tough for me to adjust.

> Laila: I have a hard time adjusting to school environment. First, I am posted far away from home, to a very different setting [than] where I came from. Sometimes, I feel like I want to teach near home so bad…Secondly, my heart is not so into teaching. I am doing it because I felt responsible. Some of the days, I am so disappointed at myself and I started to feel bad about myself that I want to quit my job. Thirdly, I feel that this job is consuming me from the inside. I spent most of my time preparing for class… I don't have time to do other things. Lastly, I feel very awkward with other teachers due to [the] age gap and all. I just don't have any topic to talk to them [about].

> Alya: For months I've been like, I've kept quiet, like I don't want to talk to anyone, I just want to go home…and once I'm home, I just want to sleep, like every day I would like sleep in the afternoon from 2pm until 5 or 6pm…I just want to like…shut off.

In one sense, the reflections above were in line with existing literature that acknowledges a sense of 'practice shock' and tiredness as common experiences for beginning teachers (Caspersen & Raaen 2013; Flores 2001; Schaefer 2013; Schatz-Oppenheimer & Dvir 2014). However, for these teachers, workplace challenges (such as high workloads and a lack of resources or basic infrastructure) sat alongside living challenges and an absence of both mentoring (professional) and familial support. The magnitude of the 'shock' that these teachers described was different to that which emerged in our interviews with New Zealand-based teachers.

Like Frank, Siti and Hana, Alya and Rayyan carried multiple extra responsibilities. Rayyan lived on site at his school due to its remoteness, which meant that he was often called upon to provide additional tuition and educational support to children outside of school hours. However, Rayyan indicated that he had grown to enjoy living and working in his school community due to the friendliness of the school community. Laila's school had serious leadership and infrastructural issues and complex community needs. She told us that she avoided eating or drinking between 7.30am and 4.30pm on school days, as the toilets often did not work. Laila described her school as "totally unexpected beyond my imagination; the problems in my school [are] beyond my imagination, something that I have never encountered". Along with Alya and Rayyan, Laila described her first year as a "roller coaster", but unlike them, she had refused to take on additional responsibilities besides teaching, instead, taking responsibility for most of the English language classes in her school. Both Alya and Rayyan indicated a desire to continue working in education beyond their 'bond', Rayyan in a position from which he could "fix things". In contrast, Laila stated that she intended to leave teaching once her youngest students had left primary school and she had fulfilled the terms of her bond. She said: "I don't think I can stay long in this profession".

Grappling with 'best practice'

Literature on beginning teachers suggests that the first teaching year is a time of experimentation and trying out different pedagogical techniques (Flores 2001; Flores & Day 2006; Timoštšuk & Ugaste 2010). In this sense, the need to grapple with contested ideas of what constitutes 'best practice' can be seen as an inherent part of the transition to teaching for any beginning teacher. However, the Malaysia based teachers in our study were working between disparate teacher education and professional contexts, and in the case of Frank, Rayyan and Laila, in schools unlike any they had encountered before in Malaysia or New Zealand. Not surprisingly, in the teachers' interview conversations, grappling with disparate notions of 'best practice' and disparate ideas regarding the role of the teacher emerged as an ongoing process, particularly in relation to two areas: engaging children in learning, and responding to challenging behaviour.

Engaging children in learning

In Malaysian public school settings, English is taught at each year level for five hours per week (one hour per day). The question of how best to engage children, and maintain their engagement over time, was a key challenge that emerged in our interviews with the Malaysian teachers. All of the teachers noted that they found young children particularly difficult to engage, partly due to their lack of literacy in any language. While strengthening English language learning and teaching is a policy priority for the Malaysia Ministry of Education (2012), English language learning is not a priority in all Malaysian communities. Laila, Rayyan and Frank's school communities had little or no exposure to contextualised English language use, and many children in their communities spoke limited Malay. Laila commented:

[The thing I find most difficult is] getting the pupils to understand the language or at least get[ting] them motivated to learn. Where I am teaching now…most of the pupils are only in school till the end of primary school…Proficien[cy] in English is the last thing in their minds. Only to some, education is really important.

According to Goh, Saad and Wong (2012), a beginning teacher who is competent exudes confidence, and is enthusiastic, innovative and adaptable. The six teachers who we interviewed revealed a high level of enthusiasm, innovation and adaptability in their accounts of working to engage students in English language learning, describing their efforts to adapt and apply pedagogical approaches from both New Zealand and Malaysia. Siti reported that she acted like "a clown in the class" and used children's interests as a basis for learning. Frank described his excitement at finding English-language story books in his school's under-used resource room, and his efforts to use literature as a basis for fostering engagement. Hana described her use of the Internet to source new and interesting teaching ideas, and her efforts to use technology in her teaching, including purchasing her own LCD projector. Alya stated that she tried to "put herself in [the children's] shoes" and to "make the lesson fun". She described teaching actions alongside poetry so that children could participate actively in the learning, and asking children 'hot questions' to provoke their use of particular sentence structures (for example, "if you receive 50 ringgit how will you spend it?"). All of the teachers were involved in remedial English language teaching, and Siti's teaching had been videoed as an example of exemplary practice. Frank and Siti noted that their school English language grades on the national standardised tests had improved dramatically since they had commenced teaching. Laila's refusal to take on additional responsibilities within her school was partly because she was committed to focusing on developing children's English language proficiency. Laila, Alya, Rayyan noted that they were often asked to share their teaching ideas with colleagues. Laila commented that as a group, they sometimes stood out when they attended courses together, because they were willing to contest others' notions of 'best practice'.

All six teachers expressed a commitment to teaching children well, sharing good ideas with colleagues, and sometimes, questioning the status quo if they felt it was detrimental to children's learning. When we asked what they had most enjoyed about their first year teaching, in line with other literature on beginning teachers, the teachers highlighted children's achievement and engagement in learning (Timoštšuk & Ugaste 2010), for example:

Siti: The best thing about teaching? The time when I know that my pupils understand my lesson, and the time that I know that I have helped them…and the time that I know that …the lesson and the knowledge that I have given to them, they use it in their daily life, yes.

Hana: [What I find enjoyable is]…having the kids able to learn what you expect them to learn, for an example, like today, your objective is to at least get them to say the phonemes this and that and…most of them could catch it so there's something like, yay!

Alya: The proudest moment will be my students can write sentences, *simple* ones…simple sentences, especially when…they're very weak in writing (emphasis original).

Laila: The proudest moment [is] that the kids can actually read….Two of them, they don't have teachers for the first four months of the year last year…so I get the class fresh, you know these kids that never been to school, not even preschool, started school last year…Two of them can actually read this year…That's the proudest moment.

We were impressed by the teachers' professional and affective investment in their students, despite their limited access to teaching resources, a sense of pressure to perform (Hana and Siti), a lack of mentoring support (Alya), homesickness (Alya and Laila), and a very difficult introduction to teaching (Laila). However, Gu and Day (2013) have noted, while a sense of vocation or 'calling' is an important factor that facilitates teacher resilience in otherwise challenging circumstances, this is difficult to sustain over time, unless warm collegial relationships are also present within the school environment. We return to this point below.

Responding to challenging behaviour

A further concern that emerged in all of our interviews with the Malaysia based teachers was how to respond to children's challenging behaviour. 'Behaviour management' is a common concern for beginning teachers (Flores & Day 2006), but as graduates of a twinned teacher education programme based in disparate socio-legal jurisdictions, the six teachers had been exposed to contrasting ideas of what constitutes 'best practice' in this area. The teachers described their use of ideas from both contexts and revealed a kind of grappling with these ideas, and with material and social realities in their unique school contexts.

The teachers described four ways of responding to children's challenging behaviour: working to foster children's interest, using positive incentives, using corporal punishment, and 'being strict'. Alya had been warned not to reprimand the students in her school, due to the possibility of parental aggression. Here she recalls the warning she received:

> [On] the first day I was warned by my colleague 'do not scold those students... scold, like or cane, or whatever...because their parents are quite...aggressive'. Like a few years back, there was a teacher, he was like giving punishment to the students because they were not doing their homework and then the parents brought along like a whole village...trying to kill the teacher, and last year there was a father tried to grab the teacher's collar, and it was like very terrifying for me.

Alya intentionally worked to avoid behavioural challenges by keeping children interested, noting that this was effective not only behaviourally, but also pedagogically. Siti described using positive incentives as a way of engaging junior classes, explicitly connecting this approach to her experiences in New Zealand: "I remember the one that I learn in New Zealand when they said 'kids love stickers' (laughter),...so I did a sticker chart, the reward chart". Rayyan noted that behavioural challenges in his classes may have reflected a lack of success in engaging students sufficiently. He said, "I might not be a fun teacher (laughter)...I think that's what I'm lacking ...I need to improve on that this year."

Corporal punishment was an area where Laila and Frank grappled with what 'best practice' looks like. This was abolished in New Zealand schools in 1990 (http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/primary-and-secondary-education/page-8) but remains an accepted form of punishment in Malaysian schools. Frank was responsible for 'discipline' at his school. Here he describes using corporal punishment in response to a child's behaviour:

> Recently I had to use this cane, you know this long rattan, and I hit [a boy] because he was being so naughty, he just wouldn't want to listen, yeah he punched another kid that day so I was at my limit... I just hit the kid ...Yeah so you go back home and you think about it, was that right or wrong?....Yeah, it keeps you up at night sometimes (laughs).

Despite suggesting that his use of corporal punishment was necessary and inevitable, in his statement "it keeps you up at night", Frank articulated a sense of ethical uncertainty about whether his use of corporal punishment constituted 'best practice'. Laila also recalled having used corporal punishment in the classroom, but unlike Frank, she had rejected it as an acceptable response to children's challenging behaviour. Laila recalled:

> One unfortunate day, I was unable to control my class and this one particular boy got my blood boil (figuratively speaking). I hit the boy. I lost my temper. I felt so bad afterwards and thought to myself what kind of teacher have I become? I am becoming more and more like the teacher I swear I don't want to be. That day I learned no matter how angry I am I just need to keep my hands to myself.

Laila revealed how teaching is both a professional and an affective undertaking (Pillen, Beijaard & den Brok 2013), associating her use of corporal punishment with 'losing her temper' rather than good professional judgment. Laila articulated the view that 'best practice' involved keeping her hands to herself.

According to Beijaard (1995), good relationships with children are a "prerequisite for [teachers'] professional growth", and in part, dependent on teachers' willingness to act as a role model for students while maintaining some emotional distance. Although Laila rejected

corporal punishment as an example of 'best practice', she nevertheless described her efforts to appear strict as a teacher:

Laila: I'm very strict, I don't really do like a caring teacher. I don't really touch the kids, I don't even want to because I don't want to (laughs). It looks like I don't like kids, *looks* like I don't like kids, but I don't want them to, you know, come to me for problems so…
Vivienne: So you avoid that?
Laila: Yeah I avoid that but they keep coming and…the kids like me no matter what anyway (laughter)…
Vivienne: They can see through that hard exterior that you try and put up then (laughter)…
Laila: Last week I was not in school for two days, I was sick and…they ask "where's Miss Laila?", so my colleagues are like, "she's sick", like "ohh…"
Vivienne: So they know you're soft hearted underneath it all. Do you enjoy that? Do you enjoy knowing that the…
Laila: Flattered (laughter)…flattered [that] the kids like me like that, yeah, they know the boundaries.

Laila's statement, "it…l*ooks* like I don't like kids", alongside her admission that she is flattered by the children's evident liking for her, reveals her affection for the children she teaches. Laila's account suggests her enactment of a professional teaching persona, and development of effective relationships with her students (Beijaard 1995).

Considering the quandaries of internationalised higher education

We come now to the fifth aspect of an 'engaged pedagogy', which is the need to consider the quandaries inherent in our provision of internationalised HE. Madge et al. (2009, p. 43) argue that this is necessary because there are "complexities involved" in any "attempt to materialise an engaged pedagogy"; we are likely to "get it wrong at times" despite our best efforts, and our "ability to be responsible and to care" may be constrained by other competing demands and/or our own personal histories. To Madge et al., some quandaries are unavoidable; often, taking responsibility requires that we recognise our limitations.

We are conscious of the need to avoid representing the experiences of the teachers in our study through the use of neat narratives. For example, we could emphasise their vulnerability as young people who have been placed in challenging teaching contexts for five years, some far from 'home', charged with meeting unrealistic expectations following a transnational education that could not equip them fully for the realities of teaching-in-context. Or we could privilege the teachers' resilience and success in studying in two national contexts, surviving where they have been 'placed', engaging their students in learning English, and finding joy in their work despite its challenges. Both narratives are 'true' but the teachers' realities were far more entangled than either one alone suggests. Further, other analyses are possible. From a postcolonial perspective, the teachers can be seen as agents of linguistic imperialism, in some cases, in communities where English is irrelevant in a day-to-day sense (Phillipson 1992). However, they can also be seen as 'good teachers' whose accounts reveal elements of an engaged pedagogy: caring *for* students and caring *about* students' learning (Madge et al. 2009). We are mindful of the risks of playing down the challenges that some of the teachers faced in their schools, oversimplifying the complexity of their diverse beginning teaching experiences, and of either downplaying or overplaying their capacity to cope. However, the teachers were coping when we spoke to them, and had established a strong peer network, providing invaluable support to each other. After a year of teaching, four of the six teachers expressed a commitment to remain in education, and a fifth (Frank), was open to an educational leadership role but unsure whether he would teach beyond his five years. Only Laila was adamant that she did not want to keep teaching beyond the duration of her bond. We wonder if her resolve may have been different had she been placed in a supportive, well-led school community (Gu & Day 2013).

So, what are some quandaries of internationalised teacher education and HE more broadly that our study highlights, and what cautions do they suggest in terms of internationalisation

policies and practices? The first concerns our capacity as 'education providers' to understand and adequately prepare students for the unique transitions they will experience beyond HE. Madge et al. (2009) suggest that we need to think beyond our classrooms or lecture theatres, but how can we think about what we do not understand or cannot necessarily predict? Although, in some respects, this quandary relates to all HE teaching (Walker 2008), we worry in particular about the appropriateness of taking students from one context and educating them in (and for) another. For graduates in professional programmes, who must move between disparate socio-cultural and socio-legal jurisdictions as they transition to work, there is a possibility that 'normal' experiences of 'practice shock' may be accentuated, and made more challenging by others' expectations that overseas-educated novice professionals will somehow be 'different' or 'superior' to those educated locally. However, arguably, any graduates can work elsewhere in the world, so this should be a consideration for all students, and not just for those in twinned education programmes (Anderson, McGrath & Butcher 2014). We wonder what the teachers in this paper will be doing in five or ten years. As products of a high level of government investment, Frank and Laila's possible departure from the profession would be a considerable loss. We wonder what conditions might better prepare transnational graduates of professional programmes for the challenges they may face following graduation; secure their ongoing commitment to their professions; and if they are educated *for* a particular context, to working in that context long-term.

Finally, we wonder what lessons might be learnt from the teachers in this study regarding the education of 'local' students in professional HE programmes. Concerns are often expressed about the desirability of international students adapting to their study contexts and adjusting to 'how we do things here' (Haigh 2002). Much less attention is paid to the rich learning involved in such adjustments, or the 'necessary skilfulness' inherent in moving between social worlds as part of living and studying in a new place (Anderson 2014). While transnational graduates may face more challenging experiences of 'practice shock' than local students when they move 'home' to work, we wonder if they may also be better equipped to cope, for example, with being in an unknown and unfamiliar living environment, negotiating ethical dilemmas, making new collegial and friendship networks, and being away from family, precisely because they have practised such 'coping' as part of their previous study journey. While we are cautious about extrapolating beyond our very small study, Rayyan supported this view when he recalled how he had initially coped with being based in a very remote location. He said, "I mean we've [already] been away [from our] families for a long long time,…one year…Every night last year I kept telling myself that is just another adventure, this is another adventure". Perhaps, rather than worrying about transnational graduates' capacity to cope in locations that differ from their study context(s), we should instead recognise the everyday coping that is already inherent in their study and living journeys. Perhaps we should be more concerned about how we can provide local students with similarly formative opportunities, or about local students' readiness to take up employment in new contexts at the end of their studies. We wonder how internationalisation might be re-imagined as a means to strengthen all students' bi- and multilingual capability; their capacity to cope with a lack of family support; their ability to develop strong, supportive and enduring peer networks in new places; their understanding of different approaches to professional practice; and their recognition that 'best practice' in their professional field is contextually determined, and often, a matter of ethical judgment. Perhaps part of caring for and about transnational students and graduates is that we consider how their experiences might inform HE pedagogy more broadly (Anderson 2014).

Concluding thoughts

In conclusion, in this paper we have grappled with what an 'engaged pedagogy' looks like in practice (Madge et al. 2009), in light of our interviews with six Malaysia-based graduates of a twinned teacher education programme. Although working within one national context shaped by a common set of policy imperatives, each teacher's work context was also unique. The

teachers' interview accounts revealed material, professional and affective challenges, as well as joys, successes and satisfaction. They also revealed a commitment to caring for children and caring about their learning; like us, the teachers seemed to be grappling what an engaged pedagogy looks like in practice. Our interviews with the six teachers raised a number of quandaries rather than a 'how to' list in response to this question. This is consistent with Madge et al. who suggest that an engaged pedagogy is sometimes more about recognising complexity and limitations than finding neat solutions.

Our study was small in size and scope, but it nevertheless highlighted some important considerations that may be relevant to transnational students in professional programmes other than teaching, to internationalised HE more broadly, and to HE researchers interested in internationalisation. These include the need to reflect on how we might better equip students for life after study, including what educational experiences and pedagogical practices might pre-empt the challenges graduates are likely to face as they take up employment 'back home' or elsewhere; how we might build their resilience, and capacity to cope with unfamiliar contexts and 'other' ways of working; for students in professional programmes, how we might support their commitment and capacity to remain in the profession long-term; and how we might apply lessons learnt from transnational students to our work with local students. We concur with Madge et al. (2009) that in internationalised HE, there is an urgent need to think beyond the classroom to questions of relationality and responsibility, and the quandaries that these raise.

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